An avid follower of Ovid

Cliff Fell, author of In a desert land, introduction

WORDS LIVE ON: Ovid, in a second illu-

imation.

To lead me off in a cheerful dance.

But there it was singing on the page,

I was vaguely bemused by the

similarity, but thought little more of it. In

fact, I put it down to a simple

coincidence, and kept on with Tristia.

I heard this line from the song

Workingman's Blues 2: ‘I'm expecting

to see you/To lead me off in a cheerful dance.’

For example, in Tristia, Book 5,

section 12, Ovid writes: ‘Or Niobe,

bereaved, lead off some cheerful dance,''

So which lines are they,

and images from all over the place.

What I find much more intriguing about

this discovery is that the more you listen to

Modern Times, the more you sense that

Dylan's cast the songs as a modern

lament, in the mask of a new Ovid, a

kind of modern exile in the modern

world.

That’s part of his process as a writer.

What I find much more intriguing about this discovery is that the more you listen to Modern Times, the more you sense that Dylan's cast the songs as a modern lament, in the mask of a new Ovid, a kind of modern exile in the modern world.

And that’s what Dylan is, in a way –

With the mystique that surrounds him,

he's the ultimate exile, a voice that

happens to be speaking from the world's

outback at the world's end.''

This was bound to cause further

controversies over copyright and charges

of plagiarism. I would hope not. That

isn’t the point. People who talk about

that are simply missing it.

This is homage, not plagiarism. It's not

something to bewail, but celebrate.

A great artist is forging new work, and as

he immerses himself, the lines are going to fit me like a glove.‘‘ Zdunek, think what

it’s going to do for Ovid – it'll keep his

work alive for another 2000 years.

No artist works in a creative vacuum.

Anything original must go back to the

origins.

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Dylan's in good company. Ovid, itself, stole lines and stories from Homer, as did Virgil. And Dante, Chaucer and Shakespeare all style ideas and lines from other authors, just as Dylan is doing.

This issue is bound to raise further

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